

# STRANGE DAZE

NEWSLETTER, WINTER 1999

## EDITORIAL

Around this time last year I issued a newsletter, which was generally well received, so I thought I would do the same again as Strange Daze is now overdue. I've been particularly busy since June, which hasn't helped, but also I've been drained of pretty much all my enthusiasm for UFOlogy and related fields. Indeed, this will be my final editorial. There are two main reasons for this.

### Five years on: Close, but no cigar shaped mothership

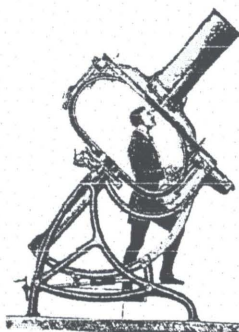
First of all, since 1993 when Strange Daze first started I've had regular input into UFO case investigations. On occasion I've even investigated a few cases myself, although I've never considered myself to be a "UFO investigator" proper. In that time I've spoken to many witnesses/experiencers, read many and varied case reports, put dozens of photographs under the magnifying glass and watched hours and hours of videotapes of lights in the sky. I've seen the TV programmes, scrutinised the autopsy footage, been to the big UFO conferences and small group meetings. I've spoken to many other UFOlogists (and quite a few have contributed to Strange Daze over the last five years), ploughed through the exchange magazines I receive, and my bookshelves groan under the weight of all the

UFO and paranormal books I've collected along the way. I believe that 5 years is long enough to be able to reach a few valid conclusions. The first point I'd like to make is that "UFOlogy" is merely a convenient umbrella term for several quite distinct fields of research, because UFOs - lights or objects seen in the sky which are unidentified, or unidentifiable - can be produced by several different mechanisms. To take one of these mechanisms, **earthlights**, here we have a branch of geophysics where the Earth itself, in certain locations (e.g. Hessdalen in Sweden), actually generates balls of lights by an as yet unexplained mechanism. Clearly, these UFOs need to be studied by physicists.

To take another mechanism, some UFO reports are certainly generated by secret and experimental aircraft designed and flown by military forces. (Some would have it that alien technology is being used in these

new aircraft, although I have seen no convincing evidence of that and I think it underestimates human creativity and engineering.) These "UFOs" would need to be studied by experienced aircraft spotters and analysts.

"UFOlogy" also includes, rightly or wrongly, the hideously titled subject of "alien abduction". According to Albert Budden



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Current subscription rates: £6.00 for 4 issues, payable in stamps, cash, cheque or postal order payable to "G. Dixon".

With many thanks to **Ian Dixon** and **IBIS** for the generous use of their facilities.



though, no-one is being abducted and aliens are not involved. The phenomenon is being generated by a medical condition known as electrical hypersensitivity, caused by electromagnetic pollution in the environment. This, then, needs to be studied by medical doctors and psychologists along with physicists who understand the type of electromagnetic fields and effects involved. I could go on to include the many other theories that abound in UFOlogy. We all need to recognise that "UFOlogy" is not a single subject, but many. And we need to recognise that the people we need to solve the "UFO mystery" are the experts in these different fields. There are too many phenomena, and too many different subjects involved, for any single person to be proficient in more than one or two of them.

*So who do we have investigating UFOs?*

The average gal or guy off the street who happens to be interested in UFOs, but isn't, usually, an expert in any of the fields.

Now, this isn't meant to knock the many dedicated investigators out there, who devote a lot of time and effort to investigating and interviewing, and are very skilful at what they do. "UFOlogy" - any of the subjects covered by that umbrella term - couldn't work without the investigators. But until we break down UFOlogy into its component subjects and work with experts *in those fields*, UFOlogy will never attain the credibility it needs and deserves, and we won't get the answers to the UFO mysteries (N.B. - plural).

UFOlogy fails to attract enough of those specialists because it is perceived to be a fringe subject, without any serious foundation. This is understandable, and why I have suggested that UFOlogy needs to be visibly broken down into the component subjects and each one treated as a separate, serious field of study. Right now, the researchers into the geophysical problem of earthlights share the same platform at UFO conferences as the crystal gazers who believe the aliens have come from the astral plane to save man-and-womankind. While this is going on, we're wasting our time, folks. There is also the problem of witness reports. We can't analyse UFOs directly, only the UFO reports. Many are vague and imprecise about dates, times, locations and directions. When you take out all of the Identified Flying

Objects (IFOs) that are "solved" cases, you are left with the "true UFOs" - but how many of those are only unidentified because the witness report is too far off the mark for an identification, or a reasonable guess to be made? In one recent case I looked at, a witness had observed some lights in the night sky and had managed to record the phenomenon with a camcorder. I was presented with a witness report form, and a videotape; from the tape, it was immediately obvious that the mystery lights belonged to a normal aircraft, the camcorder had even recorded enough noise for me to tell that it was a propeller driven light aeroplane. But reading the report form, you would have thought that the invasion force from Alpha Centauri had arrived. Thank heavens we had the videotape, or this one would probably never have been solved to anybody's satisfaction. In short, witness reports can be wildly inaccurate; if anybody wishes to take issue with me on this point, I would direct them first to Allan Hendry's classic *The UFO Handbook* (UK edition, Sphere Books, 1980) which covers this in some detail. It's better to give more weight to evidence such as photographs (although they can be hoaxed, of course) and camcorder footage (ditto). Once you take out the dodgy witness report, and the few cases of earthlights and secret stealth technology, how much of the UFO mystery are we left with? We're probably left with a residue of rock hard cases that will, in all likelihood, never be solved.

I'd rather start filling in details. For example, rather than arguing about sighting X being a Venusian scout craft or an earthlight, how are earthlights formed? I have little doubt that earthlights exist because we have a sufficiently impressive body of evidence. What they are is not a UFOlogical problem - now it's a geophysical problem.

I have never been impressed with the extraterrestrial hypothesis, and over the last five years I have seen nothing to convince me alien ships have been visiting earth. Earlier, I mentioned the alien abduction phenomenon, a part of UFOlogy who's very name suggests that

extraterrestrials are involved. *Well they aren't, end of story.* That's not to say the phenomenon isn't real. It's not that simple. The phenomenon is totally mis-named, although what it should be called is a matter of debate. The phenomenon has strong paranormal elements that are much more interesting - and while I see UFOlogy going down a dead end, I think the fields of paranormal research - including "abduction" research - are much more interesting and will offer much greater opportunities for research.

But the subject of alien abduction is a dangerous one, when people can buy into the myth that aliens *really* are abducting humans for genetic experiments or whatever. That is simply a ready made American myth that is screwing up people's lives, in the same way that the belief in satanic ritual abuse has. "Alien Abduction" is a field worthy of serious study, but not encouraging. This is why I am not involved in, and would not encourage anyone to attend, the proposed UK "Alien Symposium", suggested for next year. At best, this would be a bad copy of the 1992 MIT symposium on abductions, 7 years too late; at worst, it would be yet another platform for some of the speakers to propagate the dangerous and false myth that what some people are experiencing really is physical abduction at the hands (tentacles?) of alien creatures. No thanks.

The sooner we can examine the *genuine* phenomenon, a purer version, less tainted by this grotesque and popular version of events, the better. But it may be a long time before we are able to do that, such has been the success of the Hopkins/Mack/Jacobs version of what people *should* be experiencing.

#### **Scare in the Community**

UFOlogists also never fail to amaze me at how successful they are at shooting themselves, and UFOlogy, in the foot - if not in the head. I have never - ever - come across a more uncooperative, sometimes unpleasant and usually mad group of people as I have within the UFOlogical "community". I put that word within inverted commas because it is really stretching the definition of "community".

I don't want to tar everyone with the same brush; at this point I would like to say that I have, of course, met some great people through UFOlogy, and I'd just like to mention a few of the intelligent, sane folk that I've come across, many of whom have helped with Strange Daze in some way: Kevin McClure, Dave Sivier, Tim Matthews and Bill Rose, Paul Devereux, Philip Mantle, Gloria Dixon, Dave Pointon, Timothy Good... I could go on, but I won't. I suspect that some of the people on that list wouldn't agree about the inclusion of the others. But I'll just say that there are lots of good people out there connected to UFOlogy that I'm pleased to have met. But there are lots of others I wish I hadn't...

As you might expect, with so many different subjects and theories within the umbrella, there really isn't much common ground and "UFOlogists" have a hard time communicating and getting on with each other. One of the major differences between UFOlogy and scientific subjects is the lack of a central paradigm that all of the participants can agree on. But more than that, the UFOlogical community is a psychologists paradise. I've never come across so many people with personality problems and mental instabilities, major and minor, which suggests that there are facets of "UFOlogy" that attract weirdos like pubs attract drinkers. Which does us no good at all. I won't name names, for fear of libel action, which is another thing to consider. If people are going to court over something as nebulous as UFOs and UFOlogy (e.g. the Stanton Friedman - Jenny Randles court action may be the best remembered), is it really worth the hassle? Court action is something I would never really consider taking, even if there are some real UFOlogists out there. I'm inclined to get out now while I still have my sanity and an overdraft facility. In many ways, the UFOlogists are far more interesting than the UFOs, but that's not why I'm involved in the field.

Consequently, I'm handing the editorship of Strange Daze over to Gloria Dixon, a name that should be familiar to you all. I've taken it as far as I can in the last 5 years, and now it's time to let someone else take



over for a while. I'm 100% sure that Strange Daze will be in good hands.

# NEWS

From Joseph Trainor's excellent  
UFO Roundup web site  
<http://ufoinfo.com/roundup/index.shtml>

## DISC-SHAPED UFO SEEN OVER GRIMSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE

A "vast gleaming disc" appeared in the night sky over Scartho, a suburb of Grimsby, Lincolnshire, UK at the end of July 1998.

"A UFO has been spotted over Scartho fork, according to a report. The vast gleaming disc hovered over the roundabout

(rotary in the USA--J.T.) and then soared upwards, said the Springfield Road resident."

"The first time I saw the UFO, I was frightened. The disc gave off a red glow and then turned green,' he said. 'The disc spun off into the night sky, moving this way and that in an apparently random way. Who knows where it was going?' he said."

"One week later, the disc returned on a moonless night, he said."

"It was definitely the same disc and emitted the same color light. It was hovering high up over the roundabout,' he said."

"UFO expert Dave Jackson of the Scanthorpe research group Hangar 18 said, 'We have not had sightings in Scartho before, but in recent weeks there have been reportings of activity in Immingham and Goole.'"

Grimsby, Lincs. is 140 miles (224 kilometers) north of London. (See the Grimsby Evening Telegraph for August 5, 1998, "Flying saucer sighted at Scartho." Many thanks to Errol Bruce-Knapp for forwarding the newspaper article.)

## PHANTOM PLANE CRASH AT SKELMERSDALE, LANCS.?

A strange incident took place near Skelmersdale, Lancashire, UK the evening of July 26, 1998.

"Emergency Rescue launched a full-scale rescue search after people said they saw a microlight aircraft plunge from the sky a ball of flames. Skelmersdale police, paramedics and firefighters were joined by Lancashire Police helicopters during the alert..."

"Eyewitnesses said they saw the one-man aircraft nosedive into a field close to the Rainford Bypass with smoke trailing behind. But nothing was found after an extensive two-hour search of the field in the Rainford and Bickerstaffe area."

"Skelmersdale leading firefighter Tony Cavanagh said, 'We got the emergency call that an aircraft was in distress over the Rainford Bypass. After a lengthy search

we were unable to locate it. I think it's a case for Mulder and Scully. They're probably searching the top of the bypass now."

(See the Ormskirk, Maghull and Skelmersdale Advertiser for July 30, 1998. Many thanks to Gerry Lovell of Far Search for this report.)

## LARGE TRIANGULAR UFO SEEN NEAR FROME, SOMERSET

On Tuesday, August 18, 1998, at 5:48 p.m., James M. was walking home from work in Frome, Somerset, UK when he looked up and saw a triangular UFO crossing the sky. "It looked kind of boomerang-shaped and black" and "traveled at the speed of a military jet towards Trowbridge" in Avon.

"As an avid aviation fan for many years, I can tell the differences between a MiG-29 and a (Sukhoi) Su-27 from 10,000 feet, so I am not wrong in telling people that what I saw is not an aircraft" currently known to exist. "The weird part is that it moved to the left about 500 yards without turning on its 'nose' and without tipping its 'wings' (banking--J.T.) In fact, it stayed on the same heading as before."

According to Bret C., the same UFO was seen by two witnesses in Southwick, a village between Frome and Trowbridge the same evening. (Email Interview)

## BIZARRE ORANGE UFO SEEN IN EARBY, LANCASHIRE, UK

A strange orange "plasma-like" UFO appeared twice over the town of Earby, Lancashire, UK, first on Saturday, August 15, 1998, and again one week later on Saturday, August 22, 1998.

The "most peculiar plasma-like orange light was seen by a number of witnesses" in Earby. "The object is said to be 30 feet in length and appeared to have an 'undulating' or 'skipping' motion. They appeared to perform sharp turns and eventually disappeared into a valley."

"This area is known for the sighting of so-called 'Earth Lights,'" said Tim Matthews of the Lancashire UFO Society. "There is a possibility--we may be on the verge of an earthquake." (Many thanks to Lisa [Lynda? - D.N.] Matthews of LUFOS for this news story.)

## CROP CIRCLE FOUND IN ROTHWELL, LEEDS

On Saturday, August 22, 1998, at 4 p.m., David M. was approached by his son and another boy, who informed him that they had just found a formation in a field near their home in Rothwell, Leeds, UK.

"Upon getting to the field--videocamera in hand-- I was very impressed with the sight I was pointed out. At least five shapes were visible, including two double circles. I shot at least five minutes of video (footage), while a friend of mine shot more stills."

#### PYRAMIDAL UFO SPOTTED IN TELFORD

On Tuesday, September 1, 1998, Adam W. "was just closing my window to go to bed" at his home in Telford, UK "when I saw something flying in my direction. I was struck by the silence, so I opened my window again" to get a better look at the UFO.

"The shape was like a squashed pyramid, more like the top half of a diamond. At arm's length, it was about 1 1/2 inches wide by about 1/2 inch high. There was a red light on the left of the object and a green light on the right. Between them was a white strobe light. As the white light strobed, it looked as if it was going (across the pyramid's base) from the red light to the green light."

"I went to bed, and about five minutes later, I heard a helicopter in the area, so I watched the sky for a while and spotted the 'copter at a fair distance away with just the usual red flashing light." (Email Interview)

#### TRIANGULAR UFO SEEN BY FOUR OVER WEYMOUTH

On Sunday, August 30, 1998, at just after 10 p.m., Mark G. and three companions were "on a road near the old coast road" in Weymouth, Dorset, UK when they spotted something unusual in the sky.

"One of our party noticed something and pointed, I think, to the east," Mark reported. "I looked across and saw three faint but glowing lights similar to stars, arranged in an irregular triangular shape. They were also ten degrees above the horizon and moving across the sky to the right, keeping the same elevation, heading south or southwest, I think."

"The triangular shape the lights made was actually rotating clockwise as they were moving, and I got the impression that the lights did not keep the same distance from each other as they rotated."

"The 'shape' was probably a little smaller than a coin at arm's length and seemed to be several miles away. I had it in view for about eight seconds and then lost sight, as it was going quite fast. It covered about 90 degrees of the horizon in this time. I told the others that I had lost sight, but one of them still had it in view, saying several other lights had appeared to the right. They also disappeared from view."

Mark added that he "cannot think of anything airborne that would behave in that way." (Email Interview)

#### GLOWING UFOs SIGHTED NEAR BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET

On Sunday, September 13, 1998, at 7:50 p.m., Michael S. "was in my garden, collecting tools that I had left out earlier. It was a good clear night with a vast array of lower magnitude stars visible. I paused in my collecting duties to see if I remembered any of the astronomy I had learned as a boy, and also to spot any satellites."

"My attention was drawn to the southwest, where a meteor appeared above the trees in my garden (50 degrees above ground level). As I followed the red/

orange shooting star, I saw that two others were following it in a delta V formation. I still believed them to be meteorites, but then the two following objects zigzagged behind the leader."

"The leader maintained a straight course toward the northwest, heading towards Bournemouth/Hurn Airport (CAA Air Traffic Control Center). As they left my field of view, the two followers rejoined their leader. The altitude that these objects were at was very high, possibly 100,000 feet (30,000 meters), though without any idea of size, it would be hard to estimate. The speed that they were flying was about the same as fast jets at a much lower altitude, perhaps 10,000 feet. I am sure that I have seen three UFOs." (Email Interview)

#### EX-DEFENSE CHIEF CLAIMS THAT RAF FELTWELL IS BRITAIN'S AREA 51

In an interview with the UK newspaper Sunday People, Lord Hill-Norton, chief of the UK defence staff during the 1970s, claimed that the air base RAF Feltwell in Suffolk is the site where NATO forces track unidentified saucers coming in from space. Based at RAF Feltwell is the 5th Space Surveillance Squadron, U.S. Air Force. Lord Hill-Norton told the newspaper that the squadron "is tracking UFOs that may threaten Earth."

Lord Hill-Norton said he was "puzzled" by the USAF squadron's presence at the base, adding, "I have asked a number of questions about it and never get a satisfactory answer."

"The (UK) Ministry of Defence did admit that RAF Feltwell has a special U.S. unit 'tracking man-made objects in deep space.'"

"But it refused to answer Hill-Norton's questions about how many objects 'remain unidentified and how many of these were transmitting a signal,' citing the need for secrecy."

"An MoD spokesman said, 'We are entitled to refuse certain information on topics which we consider to be sensitive.'"

"But he did admit UFOs will be tracked if they are spotted."

"'They need to catalogue everything up in space,' he added."

Lord Hill-Norton remains skeptical, however. He responded, "For a start, there are no man-made objects in interstellar space. So I want to know what they are really doing. And I want to know what the Government is doing about the UFO problem. There are things flying about in our atmosphere, and we don't know what they are, who directs them or what their purpose might be. We ought to know."

"Hill-Norton believes that UFOs are the products of 'extra-terrestrial intelligences.'"

(See the newspaper Sunday People for September 13, 1998. Many thanks to John Hayes for forwarding the newspaper article.)

## BLACK HELICOPTERS CHASE UFO OVER WEARSIDE

On Friday, September 18, 1998, at 8:15 p.m., the witness, A.Z.P., "noticed a large white light in the sky. It shone like a very bright star, but I knew it could not be." Outdoors at his home in Sunderland, A.Z.P. saw that "it was a cloudy night, and all the other stars were blocked out by the cloud layer. While I watched it (the UFO), there was another smaller light directly underneath it, and, as I got closer, I realized it was a helicopter. The helicopter suddenly turned and flew in a northerly direction."

"Around two minutes after the first, another helicopter went past in the same direction., and, five minutes after that, another one did the same. This is unusual. I have only ever seen one helicopter in the Sunderland area at one time, and they could not have been police helicopters because they did not have searchlights scouring the ground."

Thirty minutes later, he added, "the light continued to move upwards out of the atmosphere, but it was going extremely slowly, around a degree every ten minutes. A plane flew toward it around 9 p.m., but it was not like any plane I have ever seen. It flew directly underneath the light, which was still moving. It went past and did not circle the light."

"I continued to watch it until 10 p.m. and then saw a smaller light detach itself from the large light. It hovered for a few seconds, before shooting off into space."

A.P.Z. saw the UFO again the next night, Saturday, September 19, 1998, but did not observe it for any length of time. (Email Interview)

## SPHERICAL UFOs SEEN IN WALTHAMSTOW

On Sunday, October 11, 1998, at 7 p.m., ufologist Tony Colbourn of the Essex and London UFO Network (ELUFON) was working in his back garden at his home in Walthamstow, a suburb north of East London.

"At approximately 1900 hours, I spotted what I could only describe as a gold orb traveling in a north easterly direction at an approximate altitude of 2,000 feet," he reported, "It is usual to see aircraft stacking above my house, as it is located in one of the main flight paths for Heathrow Airport. Whilst observing this object, I also noticed a satellite going over, which due to the visible differences, convinced me that this was not a satellite because (for example) it was brighter, bolder and moving a lot faster."

"A few minutes later, I noticed two additional orbs, white in colour, traveling northward. As they approached me, the one on the right turned in a north easterly direction and the other continued straight on north."

Colbourn rushed into the house to grab his videocamera. But when he returned to the garden, "all (UFO) activity had ceased."

The next night, Monday, October 12, at 6:45 p.m., "I noticed that the gold orb had returned, traveling the

same route. I rushed in and grabbed my camcorder, called Roy (Hale of ELUFON) on the phone and went back to the garden. I then noticed another white orb which whilst traveling became brighter. The size was similar to the end of a pencil but gradually expanded to the size of a tennis ball and then seemed to implode inward and disappear altogether."

Colbourn then telephoned ELUFON member Brian Jessop, who quickly hopped into his car and drove to Walthamstow. On his way there, at 6:55 p.m., Jessop spotted a strange light in the sky. "As it got closer, he realized it was a triangle-shaped object."

ELUFON is investigating these and other reported UFO sightings in Walthamstow. (Many thanks to Tony Colbourn and Roy Hale of ELUFON and to Errol Bruce-Knapp for forwarding these reports.)

## UFO STARTLES MOTORISTS IN STAFFORDSHIRE

On Friday, October 16, 1998, at 9 p.m., a glowing UFO appeared over motorway A34 in Congleton, Staffordshire, UK, 38 miles (60 kilometers) southeast of Liverpool, frightening several drivers.

"Theresa Hewitt, from Bromley Road, Congleton, was driving on the A34 when she spotted a bright object hovering above Moreton Level. She said, 'I saw what looked like a grey cloud moving around in the sky. It looked like a school of fish and was quite bright.'"

"At first I thought it was a cloud lit up by one of the laser lights. But we have no nightclub in Congleton, and I checked the paper and nothing else was going on that night."

"The lights were also spotted by Bill Edey from Scholar Green who was travelling along the same stretch of road at 9 p.m. He said, 'I was near Little Moreton Hall when I saw about 25 lights in a perfect spherical shape above the car. The lights seemed to follow me until I reached Congleton. I am quite a rational man and thought it might have been an aircraft, but it was travelling too slow and the lights seemed to be spinning. I nearly crashed the car because of what I saw, and I was covered in goose bumps.'" (See the newspaper The Sentinel of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. for October 19, 1998, "Drivers alarmed by UFO sightings on the A34." Many thanks to Gerry Lovell of Far Shores for this newspaper article.)

## ALLEGED ALIEN RADIO SIGNAL CAUSES CONTROVERSY

On Thursday, October 22, 1998, at 21:13 UTC (9:13 p.m. UK time), Paul Dore, an engineer with Siemens Corp., reportedly picked up a strange signal emanating from the constellation Pegasus.

In an Internet post, Dore stated that he had been doing SETI research for "a year and a half," using



the company's 10-meter (30-foot) dish antenna, plus "Inmarsat LNA with about 25db gain."

Dore reported that he was running two Pentium II processors with FFTDSP42 and SETIFOX programs. While he was out of the office, the FFTDSP42 "logged a Hit...when I came inside to take a look, I saw the last of the signal fading into static. I quickly ran the REPLAY.EXE program to replay the data."

He also calculated the coordinates of the transmission: Right Ascension - 23 degrees, 31 minutes, 48 seconds; Declination - 19 hours, 55 minutes, 50 seconds. The signal had come from the star system EQ Pegasi about 22 light-years (132,000,000,000,000 miles) from Earth.

After a careful check of the equipment, Dore began scanning again at approximately 21:17 UTC on Friday, October 23. "The same signal was picked up, and it was at the same right ascension and declination."

Once Dore posted his information, a lively debate ensued on the Internet.

Grad student John M. Dollan of the University of Montana cautioned against optimism, noting that "EQ Pegasi is an unlikely, if not impossible site for indigenous intelligent life."

"EQ Pegasi is a double star system, with both members being red dwarf stars," Dollan explained in an interview with UFO Roundup. "(Type) M4 and M6 respectively. Being of this class star, an Earthlike world is almost certainly out of the question, since either member will be too dim to support a viable ecosphere...Also, both stars are flare stars, meaning that they are quite young, and that their massive solar flares would be quite lethal to life."

While the debate raged, Dore logged three more hits, on Monday, October 26, at 5:58 and 6:45 UTC and on Tuesday, October 27, at 7:15 UTC, all from the EQ Pegasi system. He said he had picked up the signal on frequency 1453.07512Mhz, plus or minus 400hz Doppler.

While proponents claimed that a similar anomalous signal had been detected coming from EQ Pegasi on September 17, 1998, the SETI League branded the incident a hoax.

"A hoax," said Prof. Nathan Cohen of Boston University, "Not even a good one."

"It stuck out like a sore thumb," Cohen said, adding that he was unwilling to share the data used to determine that it was a hoax, adding, "My colleagues and I share the belief that we shouldn't aid the hoaxsters by telling them" how to improve on a fraud.

Cohen did reveal that the signal "lacked the bandwidth required of a SETI signal."

In an official statement, Dr. Paul Shuch of the SETI League said, "The non-profit, membership-supported SETI League has been analyzing this claim since Friday night (October 23). None of our 63 active stations around the world have been able to confirm it."

"The 'signal' has been discredited by a host of radio astronomers, amateur and professional, who have analyzed the GIFs posted to the Internet," Dr. Shuch

said, "The person who reported the alleged signal has violated every principle of responsible science. He has not fulfilled the carefully-crafted SETI League signal detection protocols to which all of our members are signatory." (Many thanks to Stig Agermose and John M. Dollan for this story.)

## NEW UFO SIGHTING IN NORTHUMBERLAND

On Friday, November 6, 1998, Derrick G. Carvell "was out with my wife Anne for a walk with our dog" in Seghill, Northumberland.

"As we approached our parked van at 6 p.m.," Carvell reported, "I happened to look upward. Travelling in a northerly direction, I was amazed to see 12 white lights moving in a perfect line, one behind the other, almost like a train in the sky with white windows."

"At arm's length, the row of lights appeared approximately three feet (0.9 meters) long. As they were more or less straight above us, their powerful lights flashed beams down to the ground, one after the other. They did this only once. The beams appeared angled and silvery in colour. Almost instantly, all of the lights dimmed but could still be made out as they moved off into the distance--before fading completely from view."

"The area of the sighting is only 6 miles from Newcastle International Airport," he added, "I noticed that there were two more aircraft moving in toward the airport. Also, another aircraft was lining up to follow it in. The lights travelled across the area of sky near the two aircraft but at a much higher altitude. My brother tells me that the altitude of the aircraft on the path of approach to the airport would have been about 1,500 feet. The objects were at a much higher altitude. It is very difficult to be exact, but I would say in excess of 5,000 feet, taking into account the beams of light that reached ground level." (Many thanks to Dave Ledger of UFO Scotland and John Hayes for this report.)

## ABDUCTION WATCH

At the general request of Kevin McClure, I'm turning over the rest of this issue of our newsletter to Kevin's news sheet Abduction Watch, with the hope of getting it out to the widest possible readership. AW is one of the best items around at the moment and whether you agree with Kevin or not, it is indispensable reading for anyone involved in UFOlogy. Here's your chance to find out why.

This issue of **AW** is a special, looking at claims of small objects being implanted into the bodies of people alleged to have been abducted by aliens. Like No.6, when *AW* dealt with hypnotic regression, other magazines are welcome to use the whole of this issue as an article, and I will be happy to supply it on disk - name your format - to any respectable editor who wants to publish it, or to anyone who wants to put it out on the Net. We might as well reach as wide an audience as possible when people are being led to believe that they are being controlled and spied on by aliens, and when the evidence presented for that assertion is at best idiotic, at worst psychologically harmful. I am at a loss to comprehend the motivation of those who want us to believe that we are no more than slaves to aliens, and this issue is a challenge to them, their evidence, and maybe their motives and integrity, too. Let's see.

The technical and scientific input in this issue has come primarily from members of ASKE, the Association for Skeptical Enquiry, so far as I know the only effective, national sceptical organisation in the UK. Membership of ASKE costs only £15 a year, including the substantial journal the *Skeptical Intelligencer*. Details can be obtained from The Secretary, ASKE, 15, Ramsden Wood Road, Todmorden, Lancs, OL14 7UD, or at <http://linus.mcc.ac.uk/~moleary/ASKE/>

## ***Abduction Watch 15*** November 1998

### **ALIEN IMPLANTS - A CHIROPODIST SPEAKS**

In *AW*14, I wrote briefly about the article reporting an analysis of 'alien implants', written by Dr Roger K Leir - a close associate of 'Alien Hunter' Derrel Sims - and published in both the June 1998 *MUFON UFO Journal*, and the UK *UFO Magazine* for November/December 1998. Appearing in such high profile locations, with no critical context whatever, it will have convinced some readers that the implants are real, whereas the truth is that it is strongly persuasive that the scraps of unidentified material found are just that, and no more. Happily, the short piece in *AW*14 produced two more professional, scientific views of what Leir had to say, which I'm happy to present here.

The 'implant' myth is the last refuge of the abductionists. Everything else but blind belief has collapsed, and even Whitley Streiber has, in *Confirmation*, admitted that his own much-publicised 'implant' was nothing unusual, let alone alien. You hear little of implants, now, from Hopkins, Mack or Jacobs, but they are firmly out there in popular belief. And where myth is, so too is Derrel Sims and his team. Oddly enough, implants are one of the few consistently unambiguous elements of the *X-Files*: it may not be quite clear who placed them there, but their reality is unarguable. And they are undoubtedly one of the nastiest of the ways of persuading abduction believers that they are enslaved, and controlled, unable to control their fate, and in need of the help of Sims, or somebody like him.

As I explained previously, you'll benefit from reading the whole report, which I can't publish but I understand is out there on the Net. However, the comments I've been given make the situation pretty clear. What it is absolutely vital to remember is that Leir's article is allegedly based on reports of analyses conducted by Los Alamos National Labs and New Mexico Tech, yet we hardly get to see a word of what they have to say. What we do get is a confused apologia from a chiroprapist. Which may be what we deserve. To quote *Skeptical Inquirer*, Sep/Oct 1998, "Many of the removals have been performed by "California surgeon" Roger Leir. Actually Dr Leir is not a physician, but a podiatrist (licensed to do minor surgery on feet). He was accompanied by an unidentified general surgeon (who did not want to be associated with UFO abduction claims). The latter performed all of the above-the-ankle surgeries". Leir explains that

"The first surgeries consisted of two candidates, one male and one female. They were both subjects of the alien abduction phenomenon . . . (with objects in their bodies that appeared on X-ray examination. these first surgeries resulted in the extraction of three objects, two from the toe of the female patient and one from the hand of the male.)"

I'll start by reprinting the comments of Trevor Jordan, a retired GP, and a member of ASKE who previously looked critically at Sims' claims of alien fluorescence



"Re the encapsulation of the foreign matter in a 'dark gray shiny membrane' consisting of 'a protein coagulum, haemosiderin granules and keratin'. All of these are, as the paper admits, naturally occurring: the haemosiderin suggests a ferrous object which has, in effect, rusted. All this, I suspect, is no more than the tissue which develops around any retained foreign matter in the body, and I can't see how the author substantiates his claim that this combination of elements has never been seen before. The lack of any 'fresh or resolved' inflammatory or rejection process in the surrounding tissue suggests that the foreign body had been there for some time: once it is encapsulated, the inflammation has done its job, the encapsulation membrane isolating the foreign matter from the rest of the body.

The presence of 'nerve proprioceptors . . . which are never found . . . in the deep tissues next to the bone'. My understanding was that nerve proprioceptors (if such they were) are virtually universally present in all tissues . . .

The 'solar elastosis' (again, if it is that) is evidence of UV exposure but it is usually patchy and no significance attaches to the lesion found having been circumscribed: this is normal. It certainly does not indicate localised or circumscribed exposure to UV, otherwise we would say the same of, say, malignant melanomata which are also more common after excessive UV exposure, yet they are also discrete lesions. Nor does it necessarily indicate excessive general exposure - ordinary exposure to sunlight is enough to account for it; though it is more 'common' after excessive exposure, it isn't necessarily solely due to that factor.

In short, a poor piece of scientific writing which is unconvincing in its claims that these lesions were anything other than those which might be as well explained (we would say, better or more probably explained) as natural phenomena . . ."

The next selection of comments comes from another ASKE member, Barry Jones. He is the Managing Director of a scientific instruments company.

#### **A Response to "Alien Implants" by Dr. Roger K. Leir - MUFON UFO Journal, June 1998.**

When I was asked to comment on this article I started off intending to read through the paper and respond to each claim in turn, but I quickly discovered that this would result in my virtually retyping the entire paper. Almost every sentence contains some element of nonsense, and the result would have been very boring.

On the surface, the whole tone of the article is one of wondrous, uncritical amazement, but between the lines you begin to realise that this is partly just a front designed, no doubt, to promote the interests of Leir and others in the Aliens Business. The article is full of hyperbole and wild and fanciful descriptions, with supposition and wishful thinking substituted for careful, thorough, scientific analysis. The entire report is a tenuous, over-hyped and fanciful interpretation of very feeble data. Reams of "facts" are presented so as to appear "astounding", whereas in fact they are totally mundane with no credible explanation given to support the hype. Or maybe explanations were given by the labs involved, but we don't see them reported because they don't suit the author's purpose. For example, although the name of the Los Alamos National Laboratories is introduced, we don't get to see any direct quotes from their report.

To give a flavour of flavour of the original article to those who haven't yet seen it, I have included many quotes in the following commentary which I hope the reader will find illuminating, and perhaps even amusing.

#### **Introduction**

The article deals with the supposedly-scientific examination of supposed "alien implants" surgically removed from subjects, including a number of supposed "alien abductees". These "implants" were examined by the New Mexico Tech (a "world class laboratory") and by the Los Alamos Laboratories, though the extent to which these organisations were wholehearted supporters of the project is to my mind questionable, as we shall see later. The article discusses the results of the investigation in four broad categories: collection of the samples, appearance, physical state, and metallurgical

analysis, and these are the categories I will also comment on.

### **Collection of the samples**

The first point to make here is that there is mention of seven other such surgeries having been performed to date - where are the results of these other procedures?

The first two subjects were "both subjects of the alien abduction phenomenon"- a bold assertion. Both had objects in their bodies that showed up on x-ray, two in the toe of one subject, one in the hand of the other. Note that these are extremities where one would be most likely to pick up a splinter or other foreign body. Also they seem to me to be locations where the danger of damage or detection would be relatively high. Surely an advanced civilization who can abduct human beings silently in the night through solid walls could find a better place in the body to hide their devices?

The patients reportedly showed a "violent reaction" to having the objects touched, and they reported pain one week before the surgery and a "feeling of freedom" afterwards. This I can sympathise with - I get exactly the same feelings when I have a splinter in my finger.

A lack of inflammatory response in the tissue around the objects is apparently the subject of "numerous professional debates" - could we please be introduced to just one of these debates? Leir demands that critics show where similar findings are found in the literature, but the answer is probably quite simple - no-one else finds this particularly remarkable, and you don't report non-events. Another example of this "never-before-seen" hysteria appears in the analysis of two small balls removed from one subject, which materials analysis apparently showed to contain "a multitude of combined elements never before seen attached to a skin pedicle". Rather than "never before seen", what he really should say is "never before reported", which is not really remarkable - no serious scientist is likely to make a big deal out of such a minor fact as the elemental composition of a piece of biological tissue, even if an elemental analysis were ever done. Does Leir have a list of elements which are normally found in these circumstances? I doubt it.

Some subjects apparently displayed "solar elastosis", meaning that the skin had been exposed to severe ultraviolet radiation, which Leir found "rather shocking". Shocking? Really? In New Mexico, especially in the summer? New Mexico may be short of a few things, but ultraviolet radiation is certainly not one of them. Leir was also very surprised that the lesions were well demarcated, which he took to "prove" that the applied radiation had not exceeded the boundaries of the lesion itself. This is total rubbish; solar-induced skin lesions are in fact often well demarcated, as I myself know - I've got one, the result of being follicly challenged combined with too much ultraviolet radiation (some of it indeed acquired in New Mexico, but not from aliens!).

An item removed in a previous surgery was apparently examined by an "eminent scientist", Dr David Pritchard, at "a well-known University in the eastern United States". Why the reluctance to name the University? The object in that case was found to be "made of earthly material", surely a good indication that other such objects are likely to be of similar origin, but this possibility is given little consideration.

### **Appearance**

Electron microscopy photos were taken of some of the surgically-excised objects. These show the objects to be rather rough and irregular, with pitted, knobbly, flaky surfaces. They certainly do not display the smooth, undamaged appearance one would expect from an advanced, high-tech device. Nevertheless, the appearance of the objects is claimed to show "distinct and interesting features" - a barb, a rounded end, and some indentations. In fact it's so irregular you could imagine you could see the face on Mars if you looked hard enough (watch out for a forthcoming Leir article!). One object was in two pieces, with a horizontal T-shaped part having an indentation so that the vertical part fitted into it "in a most precise manner". Maybe my imagination is a bit lacking but the fit didn't look that precise to me. Anyway, perhaps it was originally in one piece and broke off, so it would look like it fitted together, or is that too simple an answer?

All the bar-shaped objects were covered with a "dark gray shiny membrane" which resisted cutting

by a scalpel. This was not what they expected - so what did they expect? They were "shocked" by not being able to cut through "an ordinary piece of biological tissue"- but hold on - why did they assume it was biological tissue? And shock has no place in a real scientific investigation - you just find what you find and then try to explain it.

Later we are told that the membrane was a "complex cladding" of eleven different elements, but we are not told what was so complex about it, or why we should be amazed at a material that contains eleven elements. We are surrounded by natural and artificial materials that will commonly contain at least 6 or 7 elements, and countless materials will contain 11 or more. Big deal. Later in the report, we are finally told that this membrane ("which could not be opened with a surgical blade") was shown to be a protein coagulum, haemosiderin granules, and keratin, all of which are natural substances found in the body. If the identity of this material was known all along, what was the point of all the mystery and build-up about a "complex cladding" and "strange, gray membrane" which "could not be opened"? Just hype, yet again.

It is claimed that six of the specimens fluoresced under ultraviolet radiation, which shows that they were not looking at metal, as metal does not fluoresce. However, there could be many kinds of biological matter in which UV fluorescence would be perfectly natural, including the kind of fungal growths that are the most likely cause of the claimed fluorescence on the skin of so-called abductees.

At one point Leir makes some vague comparison of one of the objects to an antique crystal radio set and then leaps seamlessly into pure science fantasy, with confused rambling about "structures" performing "numerous complex functions" using "technology such as the superatom and neutrinos". Let's hold on a moment here - "technology" can perhaps be defined as the application of science to practical devices, but what practical application has Leir ever heard of for superatoms and neutrinos? Apparently this is what one of their "consulting engineers" has "theorized", but any theory needs to be based on some factual evidence and there is none of that here - this is complete pseudo-scientific hogwash. No evidence was shown for any kind of circuitry or other internal structure in any of the samples. Mostly they're just pieces of iron with a protein-based coating - hardly miraculous or mysterious.

### **Metallurgical analysis**

The elemental analysis seems to be seized on as evidence of rigorous scientific investigation, but on even rudimentary scrutiny it turns out to be as vacuous as the rest of the report. Long lists are given of the elements found at various points on the samples, but without any indication of relative amounts or any attempt to comment on the significance (or otherwise) of the presence of these mundane elements. This is nothing less than a blatant attempt to blind the reader with pseudo-science. Also, the different compositions found at different places are hardly indicative of a precision-made item - more likely a piece of some irregular, natural material which these samples almost certainly are.

In a highly confusing paragraph, Leir says one lab told him that the samples were most likely from meteorites (I'd love to see the original quote from the lab report on this), although the nickel/iron ratio was apparently wrong for meteorite material, so, in another leap into the far side, they surmised that perhaps the samples were from just part of a meteorite! Why on earth would anyone in his right mind make such a baseless assumption? Leir, predictably, was "astounded at this revelation" and evidently didn't stop to think that these tiny samples (1-2mm diameter and less than 10mm long) were obviously a fragment of something, and fragments of anything are very likely to show statistically-varying compositions. In short, the samples are so small and irregular that their elemental composition is pretty much totally meaningless as an indicator of their origin.

In summarising these "scientific" findings, Leir says the labs made "two major statements" - first that one sample contained 11 different elements, and secondly that another sample had an iron core and iron and phosphorus in its "cladding". These statements were hyped like evidence of the Second Coming, but no attempt was made to try to explain the supposed significance of these extremely mundane findings - presumably because there is none.



The metallurgical analysis showed that part of one object contained a carbon core that was soft and "magnetoconductive". Here they seem to have invented a new scientific term - what exactly does "magnetoconductive" mean, and how was this tested? Magnetism would certainly pass through it if it was soft carbon, and it would be electrically conductive, so what's the surprise, and why do we need a new word, except as yet another attempt at scaremongering? The other part of the same object, we are told, had an "iron core" that was "harder than the finest carbide steel", and that it was magnetic. Please make your mind up, Dr. Leir - was it iron (in which case it certainly wasn't harder than carbon steel) or wasn't it? And if it was iron, it's no great revelation that it was magnetic.

After the tests, Leir says he "immediately" contacted NIDS for clarification. They took several weeks to respond, which is perhaps indicative of the lack of seriousness which they attached to Leir and his antics. Leir devotes a few paragraphs to complaining of "the politics of scientific testing", but my overwhelming sense when reading his criticisms was of responsible scientists and laboratories, having been somehow drawn into this business, trying desperately to distance themselves from a crackpot subject and its promoters.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion of Dr Leir and his colleagues was that these objects obviously have a purpose, but it was not clear to me how this inference could be drawn. An electrical engineer working with them apparently has a theory about these objects might work, but we are not treated to any details about this theory, presumably in case we injure ourselves laughing. We will have to wait for his forthcoming book to find out. Suggestions put forward by Leir himself include a tracking device or transponder, a behaviour-controlling device, or "more plausibly"(!) a device for monitoring pollution levels or genetic changes in the body. Of course - that must be it!

In all seriousness, there is only one way in which these questions will be satisfactorily answered, and that is for Leir and his supporters to turn over one of their objects for independent, peer-reviewed analysis, under sceptical scrutiny, and for the analysts to make their report publicly known in full. If he needs any help in facilitating this we can certainly help, but I doubt very much that he will take up our offer.

**Barry Jones for ASKE**

**11 November 1998**

Thirdly, picking up the point made by Trevor Jordan about histopathological analysis, ASKE member Jamie Revell obtained the views of a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists, and clarified this with his own professional opinion

### **ALIEN IMPLANT - HISTOPATHOLOGICAL COMMENTARY**

In Roger Leir's article in the MUFON journal, he refers to a number of supposedly unusual features of the histopathology associated with alleged alien implants. I have consulted with a professional histopathologist regarding the features Leir regards as unusual. The following summarises his response:

- 1) The foreign bodies were not associated with any inflammatory reaction (in one part of the paper, Leir refers to a 'mild infiltrate' of inflammatory cells in one instance). This is not at all unusual.
- 2) In two of the cases, well circumscribed lesions of solar elastosis were observed. While it is unusual for such lesions to be defined in this manner, it is not unknown for this to occur. Likewise, while the parts of the body on which the lesions were observed were unusual, they are not unknown.
- 3) It was further implied that solar elastosis normally only occurs in individuals with excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation. Again, this is unusual but not unheard of; such lesions can occur spontaneously in the absence of excessive radiation. Furthermore, lesions indistinguishable from solar elastosis may be caused by any form of radiation (such as that used in radiotherapy) and not just ultraviolet.

4) The objects were surrounded by a membrane said to consist of protein coagulum, keratin (the protein which forms hair, nails and the surface of the skin) and haemosiderin. The doctor quoted in AW#14 suggested that the haemosiderin might be due to a rusting iron object in the body; while this is possible, haemosiderin is also a normal finding in any healed wound whether or not the object causing it was made of iron. This is because haemosiderin is a normal breakdown product of haemoglobin. Protein coagulum and haemosiderin are normal findings around foreign matter in the body. Keratin is somewhat unusual, but the pathologist I consulted was able to think of two possible explanations without any great difficulty:

a) The whitish objects could be calcified sebaceous cysts; these can become very hard, are visible in X-rays and would be surrounded by keratin.

b) Keratin from the surface of the skin could have pushed into the subcutaneous tissue by the foreign body at the time of the injury, and remained surrounding it afterwards.

5) Proprioceptor nerve endings were found in the deep tissues near the lesions, 'next to the bone'. There is more than one kind of proprioceptive nerve ending, so my colleague found this insufficient information to render an opinion. He speculated that this was most likely to refer to Pacinian corpuscles, a highly distinctive type of nerve ending, which would be unlikely to be confused with any other. He was unable to recall any information on the distribution of Pacinian corpuscles in the body.

Therefore, I conducted my own research of relevant textbooks. A Text/Atlas of Histology by Leeson, Leeson and Paparo (WB Saunders, 1988, p671) says concerning Pacinian corpuscles: "These are distributed widely in subcutaneous tissue, particularly of the palms, soles, digits and in the nipples, periosteum, mesentery, cornea, pancreas and loose connective tissues." You may be interested to know that the 'periosteum' is the layer of tissue which immediately surrounds bones.

There are, however, two other kinds of proprioceptor. The first are Neurotendinous Endings of Golgi, which are found in tendons, and which are of similar appearance to Corpuscles of Ruffini, a type of mechanoreceptive nerve ending found in many connective tissues, but most commonly in the dermis and in joint capsules. Depending on what exactly Leir means by 'close to the bone', either of these do not seem particularly out of place.

Secondly, proprioceptive Neuromuscular Spindles are found in muscles, usually close to tendons. Neuromuscular spindles by definition include muscular fibres, so that it would be meaningless to say that they were found in tissue other than their normal location (so I think we can assume these last aren't what Leir was referring to.)

I also note that Leir omits to define 'proprioceptive' for the benefit of those less familiar with the relevant terminology. A proprioceptor is a sensory nerve ending which detects information about bodily posture, stretch of muscles, etc. It transmits information away from the nerve ending, making it difficult to see how the alleged implant could be using it to gather information.

My own relevant qualifications are:

Fellowship of the Institute of Biomedical Science, specialising in histopathological technique (not diagnosis) State registered Biomedical Scientist, specialising in histopathology (again, this is a technical, not a diagnostic qualification). The doctor I consulted is an MD, a practising consultant histopathologist at a district general hospital, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists.

**Jamie Revell, BSc, FIBMS**

Finally, let's look at Leir's conclusion

"It would seem that these are structured objects which serve a purpose. This purpose has not been determined yet. We hope that further study will provide answers regarding function . . . I feel it is safe to put forth theories, but these must be looked at scientifically and either proved or disproved. One such theory pertains to their ability to act as a tracking device or transponder. This would

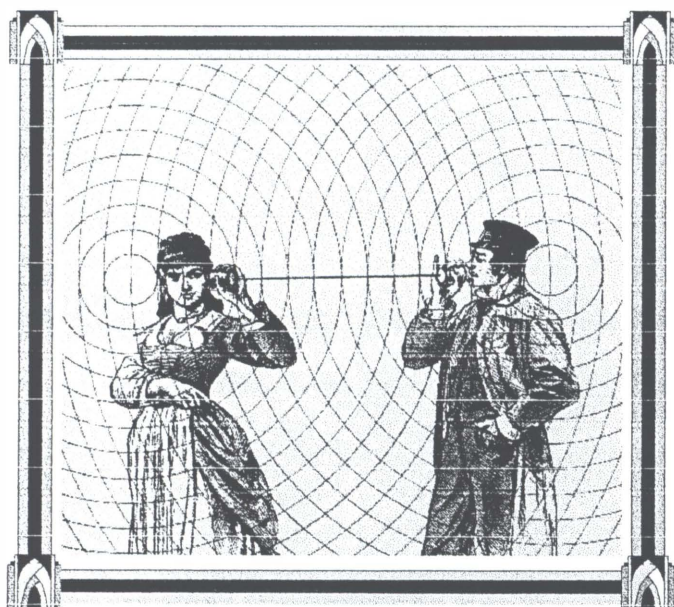
enable someone or something to find their subject anywhere on the globe. Another possibility is that they may act as behaviour controlling devices. We know that abductees seem to have compulsive behaviours. I believe a more plausible purpose might be a device for monitoring certain pollution levels or even genetic changes in the body. This may be similar to the way we monitor our astronauts in space. Only more time, effort and study will answer these questions."

I'd like to assist in providing that "effort and study". It has taken Sims and Leir more than two years to come up with these vague and, clearly, unconvincing assertions. ASKE has taken just a couple of months to produce a more comprehensive and meaningful analysis than that given by Leir, and I am happy to offer to arrange to have any of his 'implants' independently and comprehensively tested in this country, provided the results are published in full. Perhaps there are US readers who could make a similar offer. In the meantime, is there anyone out there who knows what 'Los Alamos National Labs and New Mexico Tech' **really** said about these objects, and what their view of alien abductions might be? There has to be a reason why Sims and Leir don't want us to know what was actually said. If, as has been suggested, the tests were funded by the Bigelow Foundation, they might be keen to avoid any comment that spoils the myth, and might inhibit further support. But so long as people believe in the reality of alien implants, then those people will also have their lives changed and blighted by that belief. Any effort to help those people must be more than worthwhile.

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Please excuse the dull typeface - I needed the extra space it allows! Anyway, this will probably be the last issue of AW before Christmas and the New Year. Between now and then I hope to find time to delve more into the 'Nazi UFO' business, and the ludicrous farrago that is (or more likely isn't) the Montauk Project. Many thanks to Peter Williams and David Sivier for their dauntingly erudite comments on both subjects, which just keep everything moving on. I hope you'll all have a fine holiday, and I'll look forward to hearing from you again in 1999! Thanks, **Kevin**



#### Coming soon to Strange Daze:

**Kevin McClure** responds to Albert Budden's *Challenge to Magonia*,

**Bill Rose** on UFOlogy,

Plus lots of exciting new stuff.

The next issue of Strange Daze should be out and about sometime in the first half of this year...

But in the Greenwich mean time, if anyone has any suggestions, letters or articles for publication, or if you just want to get in touch with like minded people, drop us a line at the address on the first page.

Cheers!